

Behind Haiti's extreme poverty

France, U.S. looted first Black republic

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A devastating earthquake struck Haiti on Jan. 12, leaving millions homeless and without food, shelter, clothing, medicines and water.

Various estimates indicate that anywhere between 100,000 and 500,000 people may have died as a result of the quake. An accurate assessment may take months to document. Messages of condolence, support and solidarity have poured into Haiti from throughout the world.

Various states and organizations have responded to the current situation there. The Cubans, with more than 400 medical personnel already inside the country, are providing care in field hospitals.

China has sent rescue teams to assist in finding people trapped under collapsed buildings and homes. Numerous states and nongovernmental organizations are on the ground providing assistance to the Haitian people, who are exercising a high degree of discipline and self-organization.

Corporate media reports have sought to portray Haiti as a “failed state” with weak or non-existent institutions. The Obama administration’s initiative, which includes the deployment of 10,000 troops and the allocation of \$100 million, must be viewed within the broader historical context of U.S. foreign policy toward Haiti.

Despite the pledges of U.S. governmental assistance, to be coordinated by former presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, the world’s leading imperialist power has a history of more than two centuries of suppressing the Haitian people’s right of self-determination and national independence.

Significance of Haitian Revolution

Haiti was the most prosperous of all the French colonies during the period of slavery. The production of sugar, coffee

and other agricultural products brought tremendous profits to the colonial landowners on the island of Hispaniola, which today encompasses both the Dominican Republic and Haiti. At the time of an uprising on Aug. 14, 1791, led by Boukman, more than 500,000 enslaved Africans and thousands more free Blacks and people of mixed race lived in Haiti.

During the rebellion of 1791, more than 200 sugar plantations, 600 coffee plantations and 200 indigo plantations were liberated by the Haitian masses. Some 12,000 people died during this period, including 2,000 European settlers.

When Columbus visited the island in 1492, the indigenous population was estimated at from 1 million to 3 million. Some 43 years later, no more than 500 of the original inhabitants were left.

For three centuries, French, Spanish and British colonialists competed for dominance over the island. At the time of Haiti’s independence from France in 1804, Spain still controlled the island’s eastern part.

The slave owners of the United States and of Britain’s colonies in the Carib-

Continued on page 8

Solidarite ak lit Pèp Ayisyen an !
Kouraj ! Kouraj !
Kenbe pa lage ! Kenbe pa lage !

Solidarity with the struggle
of the Haitian people!
Courage! Stay strong!



Haitians fill containers with water after the earthquake in downtown Port-au-Prince Jan. 17.

PHOTO: XINHUA

Special Issue: STAND WITH HAITI

Pages 6–10

STATEMENT OF EXILED PRESIDENT ARISTIDE:
‘We should be there in Haiti —
to help rebuild the country’ 6

UNION, COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR HAITI
Boston bus drivers host meeting to organize relief 6

WHAT PROMISED U.S. AID AMOUNTS TO
\$100 million = 1% of Goldman Sachs’ bonuses 6

CUBA, CHINA, VENEZUELA RUSH TO HELP
While U.S. focuses on troops and control of airport 7

U.S. GROUP DEMANDS OF WHITE HOUSE:
‘Food, water, medical aid, not military occupation!’ 7

BOSTON RALLY SUPPORTS FANMI LAVALAS
Party of deposed President Aristide
barred from election 8

RACISM IN U.S. MEDIA HITS NEW LOW
From Fox to New York Times, blaming the victims 9

WHERE TO DONATE EMERGENCY AID 9

ROE V. WADE
Fight to protect abortion
rights 3

YEMEN
U.S. expands
‘war on terror’ 11

**Phoenix march for
Immigrant rights**

Protest against Joe Arpaio, the racist, immigrant-bashing and terrorist sheriff of Maricopa County. See page 4.



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Sky’s the limit on monopoly drug prices

By David Hoskins

The U.S. Government Accountability Office released a December report highlighting the extraordinary price increases for many brand-name prescription drugs. According to the GAO, prices for many widely used drugs more than doubled between the years 2000 and 2008.

The report identified the growth of drug company monopolies and the drug repackaging process — buying drugs wholesale and repacking them in smaller packages — as the main culprits of the hyperinflation of pharmaceutical prices.

The GAO report identified more than 400 examples of extreme price hikes for brand-name drugs. Most price increases ranged from 100 percent to 499 percent, but increases in excess of 1,000 percent were common. Nine of the drugs evaluated actually experienced a price increase of more than 2,000 percent — that’s 21 times the original price. All these increases occurred from one day to the next.

More than half of the extreme increases were related to just three therapeutic classes of drugs — central nervous system, anti-infective and cardiovascular. These classes of drugs are used to treat ailments ranging from fungal and viral infections to heart disease.

Prescription drug cartels to blame

Pharmaceutical companies can seek 20-year patents on various aspects of new drugs. Once a patent is granted, other manufacturers are prohibited from making, using or selling the formula for the life of the patent.

The Food and Drug Administration can also protect the company’s exclusive access to the market, independent of the patents. Such exclusivity prevents FDA approval for a competing drug for up to seven years, depending on the type of drug. In addition to the market exclusivity and patents, drug companies already receive incentives to develop so-called orphan drugs used to treat rare diseases. These incentives include FDA research grants, tax credits for up to 50 percent of the cost of clinical research and a waiver of FDA fees.

Experts and drug industry representatives reported to the GAO that transfers of drug ownership rights and consolidations among drug companies have increased. According to the GAO the transfers and consolidations limit competition and contribute to extreme price rises. Fewer drug companies competing in a therapeutic class leads to fewer prescription drugs being developed within that class and allows the companies to use their patents and market exclusivity to further increase prices.

The consolidation of drug companies is typical of capitalism in its current stage of development. In his book, “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism,” the Russian communist leader V. I. Lenin identified that “this transformation of competition into monopoly capitalism

is one of the most important — if not the most important — phenomena of modern capitalist economy.” In this 1915 work that is still relevant today, Lenin referenced Karl Marx’s theoretical and historical analysis of capitalism, which showed that “free competition gives rise to the concentration of production, which, in turn, at a certain stage of development, leads to monopoly.”

This monopoly stage of capitalism was referred to by Lenin as imperialism. Internationally, imperialism is associated with wars of conquest and territorial division for the export of capital and goods. At home the monopoly stage of capitalism has a number of implications — not the least of which are price fixing and price gouging. These practices allow monopolies to drive potential competitors from the market and to fix hyperinflationary prices that provide superprofits for the monopolies at great cost to the workers.

The corporate media are constantly playing up stories about dangerous drug cartels that work to promote illicit trafficking of outlawed drugs such as heroin and cocaine. The officers of the Drug Enforcement Agency are portrayed as heroes in this epic battle between good cops and bad guys.

The media and the capitalist state rarely aim their fire at some of the biggest criminals on the scene — the prescription drug cartels that promote their legal wares to an unsuspecting public on television and in magazines, while simultaneously extorting sick patients with hyperinflationary prices for many lifesaving drugs.

Pharmaceutical monopolies rake in prime profits

A 2005 report from Families USA titled, “The Choice: Health Care for People or Drug Industry Profits,” highlights the obscene profits the drug monopolies have accumulated at the expense of patients.

The report found that combined revenues for the top seven U.S.-based pharmaceutical companies totaled more than \$190 billion in 2004. These companies reaped over \$34 billion in profits that same year. Families USA reports that all seven companies spent more than twice as much on marketing, advertising and administration (average 32 percent of revenues) as they did on research and development (average 14 percent of revenues).

The companies’ stock owners are the biggest winners. In addition, the average annual income, exclusive of unexercised stock options, of the chief executives of the seven companies was \$13 million in 2004. The combined value of the unexercised stock options for these seven executives was another \$135 million.

If the media and the DEA had really wanted to do the public a service in the war on drug cartels, they would investigate and expose the executives of the top U.S. pharmaceutical companies for profiting while those who cannot afford their extortionate prices die from a lack of access to lifesaving medicines. □

WORKERS WORLD this week...

★ In the U.S.

Sky’s the limit on monopoly drug prices	2
Women’s struggle for choice continues	3
Expanded gas drilling poses environmental threat	3
20,000 march against racist sheriff in Arizona	4
Wall St. protest says: Make bankers pay for Haiti damages..	4
RI gathering demands jobs and human needs	4
San Francisco hotel workers keep up the fight	5
Auto workers challenge bosses’ ‘turnaround’ plans	5
Restaurant workers demand justice.....	5
MLK Day brings out thousands in Houston.....	5

★ Haiti disaster elicits world solidarity

Behind Haiti’s extreme poverty	1
Statement of exiled Haitian Pres. Jean-Bertrand Aristide....	6
U.S. aid comes with strings attached	6
Boston meeting rallies support	6
Cuba, China, Venezuela send immediate assistance	7
Petition and statement from International Action Center...	7
Boston meeting features Fanmi Lavalas representative	8
Racist U.S. commentators slander Haiti.....	9
Emergency aid to Haiti	9
Solidarity with Haiti’s people	10
“Haiti: A Slave Revolution”	10

★ Around the world

U.S. targets Yemen, expands ‘war on terror’	11
Protestors demand freedom for Dr. Aafia Siddiqui.....	11

★ Editorials

Kabul and Port-au-Prince	10
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★ Noticias En Español

Solidaridad con Haití	12
Dos ejércitos	12

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37 years after Roe v. Wade

Women’s struggle for choice continues

By Julie Fry

Jan. 22 is the 37th anniversary of the landmark Roe v. Wade U.S. Supreme Court decision that guaranteed the constitutional right of women to have abortions. The decision came after decades of struggle by women in the U.S. for access to birth control and safe abortions. Roe was decided during the height of the modern women’s movement when millions of women were demanding liberation from all forms of patriarchy and sexism, including the crucial right to decide if and when to bear children.

Roe v. Wade was an incredible victory for women. No longer would women in the U.S. have to suffer through medically unsafe abortions, from which thousands of women died or were seriously injured every year. Women at last had won the right to control their own bodies, opening up an enormous array of freedoms for women who could at last control their destiny in a significant way.

This freedom for women was a tremendous blow to the sexist structure of this country, and the ruling class recognized this fact immediately. From the day Roe v. Wade was decided, it has been under attack. One of the two major bourgeois political parties, the Republican Party, made defeating Roe v. Wade one of the pillars of its political platform. Misogynists everywhere have targeted abortion clinics across the country, subjecting women and their doctors to the most heinous violence and threats. These murderers, aided and protected by the state, have closed clinics all over the country. Today, 88 percent of

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counties in the United States have no identifiable abortion provider. In non-urban areas, the figure increases to 97 percent.

Just taking a look back at the past year alone, it is clear that the right to safe and legal abortion is still under attack from all sides.

Health care reform targets abortion

The health care reform legislation that appears to be close to being finalized in Congress sells out workers of all genders, but so far still contains a particularly low blow to women. Both the House and Senate versions of the health care bill contain amendments that would all but eliminate women’s access to pay for abortion, even through private insurance that women are paying for themselves.

The Stupak amendment, named for the Democratic congressperson who proposed it, is a part of the House health care bill. The amendment mandates that anyone who receives one of the new proposed federal subsidies to purchase private insurance is prohibited from purchasing a health care insurance policy that covers abortion. Further, any employer who buys “exchange” coverage for her or his employees under one of these subsidies, also being referred to as an “exchange,” would be barred from purchasing a policy that includes abortion coverage. This mecha-

nism of federal subsidies for the purchase of private health insurance is the primary way the new legislation promises to expand health insurance coverage, flawed as that may be. Women who receive abortion coverage through their employer would lose their coverage if their boss decides to participate in the exchange.

Women on Medicaid have already been banned from receiving abortion coverage. The Stupak amendment adds millions of women to the category of those who will be denied access to abortion. Similar language in the Senate version of the legislation, proposed by yet another Democrat, Ben Nelson, would have a similar effect in barring access.

The success of these two amendments in the legislation so far is evidence of the complete abandonment of women’s rights by the Democratic Party. Democrats currently control both houses of Congress and the executive branch. Yet this Democratic legislation includes one of the worst attacks on women’s right to abortion since Roe v. Wade was decided.

Justice for Dr. Tiller

This betrayal comes right after one of the worst attacks on abortion in years: the assassination of Dr. George Tiller last spring. Dr. Tiller was one of the true heroes of the pro-choice struggle. He liter-

ally risked his life every day to provide critical, life-saving later-term abortions for women. After years of threats and murders of doctors, he was one of only a handful of doctors in the country who still provided this critical medical service.

Dr. Tiller wore a bulletproof vest every day. He traveled in an armored car. He survived a previous assassination attempt and rebuilt his clinic after it was bombed several years earlier. On May 31, Tiller was gunned down in broad daylight at his church by a notorious anti-choice bigot named Scott Roeder.

Roeder’s murder trial began mid-January. The presiding judge, who has received campaign contributions from anti-choice groups, is allowing the defense to put on a political case and argue that Roeder was acting in defense of “unborn babies.” If successful, this could lead to Roeder’s conviction on only a lesser manslaughter charge and would give the green light to anti-choice activists everywhere who want to kill doctors.

The battle to defeat the Stupak/Nelson language continues and heroic doctors are continuing Dr. Tiller’s work. Dr. LeRoy Carhart has recently become the main target of anti-choice forces, after he pledged to continue the work of Dr. Tiller and expanded the type of abortions he provides at his clinic. Women’s groups are mounting campaigns to defend his clinic.

But the right to safe and legal abortions for all women is still far from won. If anything, this past year has shown that the ruling class is mobilizing to defeat abortion rights and that a new militant women’s movement is necessary to defeat them. □

Expanded gas drilling poses environmental threat

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Plans by Pennsylvania to expand leasing of public land for shale gas drilling are fueling a growing public concern over potential hazards to the environment and drinking water supplies.

As the state seeks sources of immediate revenue to cover budget gaps, it is offering over one-third of its forest land for gas exploration of a mile-deep underground rock formation known as the Marcellus Shale. Similar gas drilling on private lands using hydraulic fracturing or “fracking,” a practice that forces millions of gallons of water laden with sand and toxic chemicals into underground shale layers, has already resulted in significant contamination of waterways and private water wells.

Yet on Jan. 12 natural gas drillers bid \$128.5 million to develop 32,000 acres of Pennsylvania state forests, twice the revenue the state had budgeted. Under pressure from the state Legislature to generate \$60 million from new leases, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources conducted bidding under duress, setting a minimum bid of \$2,000 an acre. However, the profits to be made from this drilling are so lucrative that drillers offered an average of \$4,020 per acre, almost double what such leasing generated two years ago.

The new lease agreements mean that about 692,000 acres of the 2.1 million acres of state forest will be under lease. Currently 750 wells are in production on conservation department lands, but state officials anticipate that more than 1,000 new Marcellus wells could be developed in the next 10 years.

The expansion of Marcellus drilling activity has been staggering. Eight years ago Pennsylvania offered 218,000 acres at \$30 an acre but drillers protested the rate was too high and refused to bid on three-quarters of the tracts. In 2008 a single conservation department auction of 74,000 acres with an average lease of \$2,243 per acre generated \$166 million, surpassing the total income from the previous 53 years.

Last fall, after heavy lobbying by the gas industry, Gov. Ed Rendell opposed a planned severance tax on natural gas drilling that would have generated \$90 million. Despite calls for state officials to evaluate the environmental impact of gas drilling before leasing more land, one day after the massive bidding Senate Republicans in Harrisburg announced they already had an agreement in place for additional leasing in 2011, and Rendell said he did not rule out leasing high-value parcels to generate more income.

The question is at what cost.

John Quigley, acting secretary of the

state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, expressed concern that the rush to lease state forests could threaten tracts that have taken over a century of state intervention to slowly recover after being denuded by lumber companies.

Across New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania, families living near gas drilling sites are finding their drinking water polluted by methane gas and the chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing. PennEnvironment.org director David Masur noted, “The drilling companies have shown their disregard for protecting our drinking water — seven Pennsylvania counties’ well water has been contaminated by methane, and companies are dumping toxic pollutants into nearby waterways across the state.”

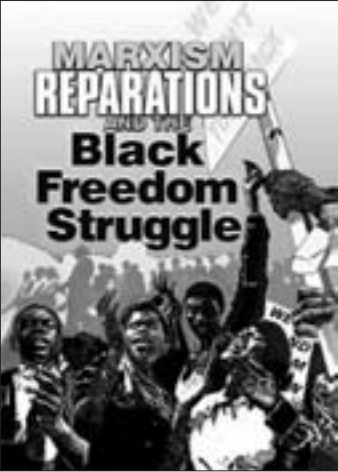
In Candor, N.Y., Vietnam veteran Fred Mayer found that explosive vapors now issue from his tap along with the water. Mayer demonstrated by using a charcoal grill lighter to ignite water running from his kitchen faucet. (nydailynews.com, Jan. 2) In a number of similar cases, fam-

ilies have had their personal water wells and even houses explode from methane build-up.

On Jan. 4 protesters gathered outside New York City Hall to speak out against Gov. David Paterson’s plan for additional gas drilling across New York state. Of particular concern was the potential for drilling in the city’s upstate watershed, which provides unfiltered drinking water to 9 million New Yorkers.

While Paterson’s plan claims the state Department of Environmental Conservation can safely monitor the toxic chemicals and heavy environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing, there is little evidence that this is happening.

Chesapeake Energy, one of the major players in the expanding natural-gas-drilling industry, estimates that it could drill 13,500 to 17,000 Marcellus Shale wells over the next 20 years. Each well requires 2 to 9 million gallons of water for hydraulic fracturing. Already several Marcellus operators have taken water from rivers and streams without authorization. □



COVER ILLUSTRATION BY SAHU BARRON

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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20,000 march against racist sheriff

By Paul Teitelbaum
Phoenix

“¡Se ve, se siente! ¡El pueblo está presente! (You can see it! You can feel it! The people are here!)” This was one of the many popular chants that reverberated through the streets of Phoenix on Jan. 16 as 20,000 people expressed their outrage and disgust with Joe Arpaio, the racist, immigrant-bashing and terrorist sheriff of Maricopa County.

The marchers made their way through various working-class neighborhoods and commercial areas where people came out of their homes and businesses to express their support. Motorists who had to stop while the mile-long, pro-immigrant march passed by also showed their solidarity with smiles, honking horns and raised fists.

The marchers represented many sectors of the workers and oppressed. There were Latino/a, Black, white and Indigenous peoples. Some participants had traveled from areas as distant as California and Oregon to attend the protest. Marchers were young and old and



WWW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

in between and included families with children in strollers and a lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer contingent chanting “We

are queer and we are here!” There were seasoned veterans of political demonstrations and people for whom this was

their first protest ever. The march concluded at the Maricopa County Durango Jail Complex. This is the home of the infamous Tent City Jail where Arpaio forces the most inhumane treatment upon detainees: temperatures in excess of 130 degrees during the summer months, the serving of spoiled food, and nonstop racial slurs and abuse at the hands of sheriff’s deputies. Speakers addressed the crowd as they gathered near the complex. Isabel Garcia, a leading southern Arizona immigrant rights activist and May 1 organizer, announced from the stage that the march was so long that she could not see the end of it. “This march is historic and unprecedented in Arizona,” she said. “The people are not going to be complacent and will no longer let Arizona be used as the incubator for anti-immigrant legislation and policies.” This march, she continued, “captures the political conditions of the border” and exposes them for everyone to see. □

Protesters say: Make bankers pay for Haiti damages

By John Catalinotto
New York

Quickly adapting to the new international emergency and need for solidarity with the Haitian people, the Bail Out the People Movement made the necessary last-minute adjustments to their Jan. 15 Martin Luther King Jr. birthday protest on Wall Street. BOPM demanded that the tens of billions of dollars the Wall Street banks earmarked for bonuses to their executives be used instead to rebuild Haiti’s infrastructure.

The speakers showed their anger at the centuries of oppression against the heroic Haitian people. They made it clear that these aid funds should not be considered charity, because Wall Street owes this money as reparations to the Haitians for the history of theft of their unpaid labor.

New York City Councilperson Charles Barron noted that President Barack Obama has pledged only a \$100 million aid package for Haiti: “There are 2 million people in Port-au-Prince. That’s \$50 a person. Israel gets \$3 billion [a year] to fight a war in the Middle East, and only \$100 million to Haiti? That’s unacceptable.”

BOPM, a coalition of community, immigrant, labor and political organizations in the New York metropolitan area, had planned the Wall Street action over the past month to raise the main issues in its program: creating jobs or providing income for the nearly 30 million unemployed and underemployed workers,

stopping foreclosures on people’s homes and guaranteeing food and health care for everyone.

The blatant contradiction that bank executives are receiving bonuses when their profits depend on the greatest government bailout in history fueled the sentiments at the protest. BOPM also calls attention to the vast sums used for U.S. wars of occupation in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere while so little goes to working people here.

The emergency facing Haiti’s poor following the earthquake made that issue the major priority for BOPM’s protest. Other related issues also came to the front burner in the past month as city and state funds in New York were cut from important programs. When the Metropolitan Transit Authority threatened to cut the free passes for students, this became an issue hitting every youth who uses public transportation to get to school and back.

To protest this cut in the subway and bus passes, about 20 students from the Young Women’s Leadership School, a high school in East Harlem of more than 400 students in grades 7-12, came to the Wall Street protest. From the podium, they explained why this seemingly small daily cut was a frontal attack on their right to a public education. Their participation showed how the outrageous cutbacks now underway can spark struggle in the hearts of the next generation of activists.

For more information see bailoutpeople.org.



WWW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Rhode Island Gathering demands jobs and human needs

Some 60 people gathered in Providence, R.I., at a grassroots All-Peoples Assembly for Jobs and Human Needs on Jan. 16 to honor and carry on the words and works of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The event was chaired by Mary Kay Harris, lead organizer of Direct Action for Rights and Equality, a Providence-based community organization whose membership and mission is for low-income communities of color. The keynote speaker was Larry Holmes, national organizer for the Bail Out the People Movement.

In attendance were representatives of the Rhode Island Unemployed Council; the George Wiley Center; the Rhode Island Public Housing Tenants Association; HUD Tenant Project; “Behind-The-Walls” prison campaign of DARE; Green Party; Providence Community Library; Jobs with Justice; Immigrants United; Women’s Fightback Network; Fight Imperialism Stand Together; the Laborers Union; United Steelworkers of America; UniteHere; the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees;

State Senator Harold Metts; and State Representative Joe Almeida.

Harris opened the assembly with a call for a moment of silence for the people of Haiti and Henry Shelton, who was recently hospitalized with a stroke. Shelton is the founder of the George Wiley Center, a Pawtucket, R.I.-based anti-poverty organization.

Holmes energized and inspired everyone with a call to study and carry on Dr. King’s campaign for jobs or income and an “economic bill of rights.” He urged everyone to study the lessons and “the real legacy” of King, which ultimately was the understanding that racism, unemployment, poverty and war are intertwined and inseparable.

— Report and photo by Bill Bateman



Rhode Island

SAN FRANCISCO

Hotel workers keep up the fight

By Joan Marquardt
San Francisco

A few hundred San Francisco hotel workers, many employed at the Westin St. Francis hotel, bordering the west side of Union Square, were joined by community and universal health care activists at a picket in front of the hotel on Jan. 13.

The Westin St. Francis is one of seven upscale hotels the workers in Unite Here Local 2 are urging the public to boycott while the entire union membership continues to demand a new contract with the hotel owners. The union distributed a leaflet about the boycott at the Starwood-Corporation-operated Westin St. Francis. It stated, “This hotel earned over \$11 million for its owners in the first nine months of 2009 (a ‘down’ year!).”

Regarding the big J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference taking place inside the hotel, the union’s leaflet said: “Shame on J.P. Morgan! ... J.P. Morgan has decided to side with a corporation trying to make health care unaffordable to working people like us. ... Be part of the solution, not part of the problem. We are asking you not to patronize this hotel. Please do not attend the J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference ... and please don’t use the Westin St. Francis until Starwood management respects the hardworking people who keep this industry going.”

More actions by the hotel workers and their allies are expected as the union fights to keep reasonable health care benefits included in a new contract.

For more information, go to www.unitehere2.org. □



Workers target Westin St. Francis hotel.

WW PHOTO: JOAN MARQUARDT

Autoworkers challenge bosses’ ‘turnaround’ plans

By Martha Grevatt

On Jan. 11 the North American International Auto Show opened to the media. Outside Detroit’s Cobo Center a picket of autoworkers drew attention away from the glitz and glamour with chants of “A job is a right! We’re going to fight, fight, fight!” Their concerns were all but ignored, of course, by the industry’s “star” executives who turned up to speechify.

A presentation by the CEO of Fiat, and now Chrysler, to the Automotive News World Congress employed lofty rhetoric, rich metaphors and allusions to Aristotle, Nietzsche and even Karl Marx. “Recovery, with apologies to Karl Marx, is the opiate of dysfunctional industries,” Sergio Marchionne asserted. (allpar.com)

For workers, including those who withstood the cold to picket two days earlier, the obvious question is, what recovery? Another question, which Marx would surely pose, is for whom is the industry “dysfunctional”? For which class?

Marchionne gave the answer from his class point of view. The European auto industry is “dysfunctional” because, “European manufacturers simply do not close plants. ... The last time a German plant shut down, World War II had yet to be-

gin.” Moreover, “The U.S. response to the crisis has put the North American sector on a more promising track than Europe’s. Chapter 11 [bankruptcy] has both forced and facilitated structural reorganization.”

The message could not have been less subtle: The restructuring must continue! Keep cutting workers, keep closing plants (including this writer’s plant in Twinsburg, Ohio), slashing wages and benefits, and by all means hold those labor costs down! Don’t just exploit workers for profit, do it better and smarter!

The brutal restructuring is not going unchallenged. As Marchionne was speaking, a group of Teamster activists who managed to get inside the hall staged a banner drop and balloon release to protest Chrysler’s decision to terminate its decades-old relationship with unionized car haulers. The switch to employing non-union drivers to carry automobiles from assembly plants to dealerships will save the company a measly \$10 per vehicle. Teamsters are getting pink slips and some may soon become another statistic in the epidemic of foreclosures. “Vergogna!” shouted Teamster activist Matteo Columbi before being escorted out of the hall. That’s Italian for “shame on you.”

Resistance to the Fiat/Chrysler restruc-

turing is happening across the Atlantic as well. On Feb. 3 all 80,000 of Fiat’s union workforce will stage a “warning strike” to protest the closing of the Termini Imarese plant, which employs 1,400 workers on the economically depressed island of Sicily. Sporadic strikes have been held at the plant over the past year. The work is to be transferred to a plant in Poland, where wages are lower. In 2008 Fiat posted a profit of 3.36 billion euros — almost \$5 billion — the highest in its 109-year history.

Rank-and-file members of the United Auto Workers — whether at Chrysler, Ford, General Motors or parts suppliers — are glad to see any organized opposition to the bosses’ aggressive restructuring. This includes the 3-to-1 rejection by Ford workers of a new round of contract concessions last fall.

Ford CEO Alan Mulally failed to mention that “No” vote on concessions when

he spoke Jan. 14 to the Detroit Economic Club. Accepting a “Leader of the Year” award from the Automotive Hall of Fame, Mulally instead took the occasion to heap accolades on each of his immediate subordinates and then thank the UAW for concessions made at the beginning of 2009.

What workers on the shop floor want — regardless of what country they live in — is not praise, thanks or empty rhetoric. We want to keep our jobs.

“Where do we go from here?” is the question that rank-and-file activists — building on the successful no vote campaign at Ford — will discuss at an upcoming conference in Detroit being organized by Soldiers of Solidarity, the Autoworker Caravan and others who oppose the plant closings, layoffs and givebacks.

Martha Grevatt is a 22-year Chrysler worker and UAW activist. E-mail: mgrevatt@workers.org

Restaurant workers demand justice

Labor, community and student supporters participated in a Michigan Restaurant Opportunities Center united protest on Jan. 12 at the Andiamo restaurant in Dearborn, Mich. The ROC has filed state and federal charges against the restaurant for discrimination and wage and hour violations.

A multifaceted ROC campaign is ongoing to win justice for workers harassed and fired at Andiamo. Numerous progressive organizations throughout Michigan are supporting the campaign by joining picket lines, signing petitions and more. Weekly protests on Fridays from 7 to 8 p.m. are ongoing in Dearborn to win justice for the workers. See www.rocunited.org/affiliates/michigan or search for ROC Michigan on Facebook for more information on support activities.



— Report and photo by Bryan G. Pfeifer

MLK Day brings out thousands Houston



The 32nd annual original Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade, sponsored by the Black Heritage Society, drew over 25,000 people to downtown Houston on Jan. 18. High school marching bands, Black cowboys on horses and beauty queens parad-

ed with activist contingents from the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the Palestinian and Haitian communities, the Harris County Green Party, National Black United Front, Pacifica Radio, im-

Continued on page 10

Haiti disaster elicits world

Statement of exiled Haitian Pres. Jean-Bertrand Aristide

The following statement was issued by Dr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Jan. 15 from South Africa.

We thank all the true friends of Haiti, in particular the Government and the people of South Africa for their solidarity with the victims of Haiti.

The concrete action undertaken by Rescue South Africa and Gift of the Givers is a clear expression of ubuntu [an ethical concept of African origin emphasizing shared humanity and giving]. ... As we all know, many people remain buried under tons of rubble and debris waiting to be rescued. When we think of their suffering, we feel deeply and profoundly that we should be there, in Haiti, with them, trying our best to prevent death.

To symbolize this readiness we have decided to meet not just anywhere, but here, in the shadow of the Oliver Tambo International Airport. As far as we are concerned, we are ready to leave today, tomorrow, at any time to join the people of Haiti, to share in their suffering, help rebuild the country, moving from misery to poverty with dignity. Friends from around the world have confirmed their willingness to organize an airplane carrying medical supplies, emergency needs and ourselves.

While we cannot wait to be with our sisters and brothers in Haiti, we share the anguish of all Haitians in the Diaspora who are desperate to reach family and loved ones.

Soufrans youn nan nou se soufrans nou tout. [If one of us is suffering, we all are.]

L'Union fait la force. Kouraj! Kenbe!



President Dr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide:
Soufrans youn nan nou se soufrans nou tout.
L'Union fait la force. Kouraj! Kenbe! Kenbe!
Youn soutni lòt nan lespri Mèm Amou an.

Kenbe! [Unity makes us strong (slogan on Haiti's flag). Courage! Stand tall! Stand tall!]
Youn soutni lòt nan lespri Mèm Amou an. [Love one another as you love yourself.]

Our love to the nation now labeled the poorest of the Western Hemisphere. However, the spirit of ubuntu that once led Haiti to emerge as the first independent Black nation in 1804; helped Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador attain liberty; and inspired our forefathers to shed their blood for the United States' independence, cannot die. Today this spirit of solidarity must and will empower all of us to rebuild Haiti. □



Boston meeting rallies support

By Frank Neisser

Over 60 school bus drivers, union members, allies and supporters packed a Haiti earthquake emergency meeting on Jan. 13 at the Boston School Bus Drivers union hall. The meeting was hosted by United Steelworkers Local 8751 (School Bus Drivers), Boston Fanmi Lavalas, the Organization of Former Members of Mahanaim Inc., AFAB-KAFANM (Association of Haitian Women of Boston), and Boston City Councilors Chuck Turner, Charles Yancey, Felix G. Arroyo and Aynna Pressley. The meeting was chaired by Frantz Mendes, president of USW Local 8751.

Turner and Yancey both addressed the crowd and expressed solidarity with the people of Haiti and those in the room with family and relatives in Haiti. They offered the resources of their offices to facilitate assistance in any way possible. Pressley sent a statement of solidarity which was distributed. A spokeswoman representing Arroyo also spoke.

A letter was read from USW International President Leo Gerard expressing solidarity with the people of Haiti. The union has donated \$20,000 toward relief efforts, and those at the meeting pledged

to seek more. Jonathan Regis of the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together discussed efforts to establish communications and coordination in the search for missing persons.

A coordinator for Fanmi Lavalas Boston described the devastating conditions on the ground in Haiti and indicated Fanmi Lavalas is positioned to see to it that aid received will be distributed to those most in need of it. USW 8751 will collect aid donations in the bus yards and funnel them through Fanmi Lavalas, as well as coordinate with other aid efforts in the city and with the city councilors. Information on where to send donations will be posted on the union Web site at boston-schoolbusunion.org.

Claude St. Germain of Boston Fanmi Lavalas and a USW 8751 chief steward, and Andre Francois of the Organization of Former Members of Mahanaim Inc. and also a USW 8751 chief steward, both spoke as did Grievance Committee Chair Steve Kirschbaum. It was announced by USW Vice President Steve Gillis that Pastors for Peace will be conducting an aid caravan to Haiti. It was also announced that the union will be coordinating with the Boston School Department for aid donation drives in all of the schools. □



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

U.S. aid comes with strings attached

By Sara Flounders

How much is \$100 million in U.S. aid to Haiti really worth? \$100 million is less than what the U.S. spends in five hours on the wars and occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The \$100 million President Barack Obama promised in emergency aid to Haiti for earthquake relief sounds like a lot of money. But it is a tiny amount when compared to what the rulers of France and the United States stole from Haiti and its people over centuries.

The U.S. imposed 60 years of sanctions and blockade on Haiti after the victory of the first successful slave revolution in history. This blockade impoverished Haiti. France demanded in 1825, with warships in the harbor, that Haiti repay French slave owners \$21 billion for the value of the enslaved Africans who were liberated. Haiti was forced to pay interest on this debt for more than 100 years.

U.S.-supported dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier diverted \$500 million in U.S. loans into his personal bank accounts in just the last six years before he fled the country. But the Haitian people still had to repay all the Duvalier loans.

Billions of dollars in debt, Haiti was forced to accept an International Monetary Fund structural adjustment program that promised "debt forgiveness." This IMF program destroyed Haiti's sustainable agriculture, bankrupted its cash crops of rice and sugar, raised the price of electricity,

and froze pay on public transit, infrastructure and vital social service providers such as doctors, nurses and teachers.

Haiti's debt to the Inter-American Development Bank was not "forgiven." It is more than \$500 million — five times the amount of U.S. aid pledged for earthquake relief.

It is always important to remember that whatever U.S. imperialism gives with one hand, it takes away with the other. The IMF announced on Jan. 14, the same day that President Obama promised \$100 million in aid, that it would be adding a \$100 million loan to its current program in Haiti. This only leaves Haiti further in debt.

\$100 million is just 7 percent of the \$1.4 billion that Haitian workers in the Diaspora send home to their families every year. Half of the population of Haiti lives on less than \$1 a day. Yet this U.S. aid and U.S. loan will force even more Haitians to immigrate to find work for their families' survival.

The people of Haiti are owed reparations from the U.S. and French banks, which have extracted billions of dollars in profits from Haiti for hundreds of years. \$100 million is far less than 1 percent of the \$18 billion that Goldman Sachs executives will receive in bonuses this year, after a \$700 billion U.S. government bailout of the banks.

And \$100 million in U.S. aid to Haiti comes with a high price tag: U.S. military occupation. □

d solidarity

Cuba, China, Venezuela send immediate assistance

By Deirdre Griswold

As soon as the devastating earthquake struck Haiti on Jan. 12, Cuban doctors began saving lives.

Years before this monumental disaster hit, Cuba had set up a medical mission in Haiti to provide health care in areas where there had been little or none; Cubans also were training Haitian medical workers in basic first aid. When the quake struck, these teams quickly went into emergency mode.

A relief plane from Venezuela was among the first to land in the stricken country, where normal services had ground to a halt. Venezuelan and Brazilian doctors soon joined the Cuban teams, who were accustomed to working in spartan conditions and had their own generators to power surgical equipment.

Other Cuban doctors who had been working in Haiti, but were in Cuba on vacation when the quake occurred, quickly returned. They were joined by additional Cuban surgeons experienced in working in difficult situations and Haitian doctors who had been training in Cuban medical schools in various specialties.

Within less than 24 hours, Cuban medical personnel in Haiti had already assisted hundreds of patients — a figure that grew to thousands by the weekend.

Fidel Castro used his newspaper column “Reflections” on Jan. 16 to relay to the Cuban people the gist of a report from the head of the Cuban medical brigade:

“The ‘Delmas 33 Hospital’ is already operational. It has three operating rooms, its own power generation plants, doctors’ visits areas, etcetera, but is absolutely full.

“Twelve Chilean doctors have joined in. One of them is an anesthesiologist. There are also eight Venezuelan doctors and nine Spanish nuns. It was expected that, at any moment, 18 Spaniards, to whom the U.N. and the Haitian Public Health authorities had handed over the control of the hos-

pital, would come, but they lacked some emergency supplies that had not arrived, so they have decided to join us and start working immediately.

“Thirty-two Haitian resident doctors were sent in; six of them were going straight to Carrefour, a place that was totally devastated. Traveling with them were also the three Cuban surgical teams that arrived here yesterday.

“We are operating the following medical facilities at Port-au-Prince: ‘La Renaissance’ Hospital, the Social Insurance Hospital, and the Peace Hospital. Four Comprehensive Diagnostics Centers are already working.”

At the same time that the Cuban government was coordinating relief for Haiti, it also, in less than an hour, evacuated 30,000 Cubans from low-lying towns on the coast opposite Haiti, until fears of a possible tsunami had subsided.

Chinese search and rescue team

At 2 a.m. on Jan. 14, about 32 hours after the quake, a plane landed in Port-au-Prince with a search and rescue team from China — which had its own earthquake catastrophe just two years ago. The plane had left China within hours of hearing of Haiti’s urgent need and flew half-way around the world.

The China Earthquake Administration reported that the team worked for more than 60 hours pulling people out of collapsed buildings in the capital. According to China Daily, the team “started working with peacekeeping forces from Brazil and Nepal and rescue teams from the U.S. and France.

“They had retrieved the bodies of some United Nations officials, including U.N. chief in Haiti Hedi Annabi and Luiz Da Costa, deputy special representative of the U.N. general secretary in Haiti, in addition to eight Chinese police officers.

“The team also set up a medical station

to offer treatment for patients pulled out of debris and medical support to medical and security personnel. The team will continue search and rescue work in other parts of Haiti in coordination with the U.N., the CEA said.”

Hou Shike, chief doctor of the Chinese medical team, reported that the team had already treated more than 200 patients with severe trauma.

Three days later, on Jan. 17, a Chinese transport plane arrived in Port-au-Prince with 90 tons of supplies, including medicines, tents, emergency lights, water purification supplies, food, drinking water and clothing.

Also on Jan. 17, President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela pledged his country would provide as much fuel as Haiti needed to generate electricity and provide transport.

U.S.-controlled airport a ‘bottleneck’

Meanwhile, the Haitian government, now barely able to function, turned over control of its international airport to the U.S. Washington’s first priority was to rush in thousands of troops. This has already brought criticism from aid groups.

Doctors Without Borders, based in Geneva, said the U.S.-controlled airport was a supply bottleneck and that there was “little sign of significant aid distribution.” (Telegraph [Britain], Jan. 18) The aid group said a flight carrying its own inflatable hospital was denied landing clearance and the material was being trucked overland from the Dominican Republic, delaying its arrival by 24 hours.

“French, Brazilian and other officials had earlier complained about the airport’s refusal to allow their supply planes to land. A World Food Program official told The New York Times that the Americans’ priorities were out of sync, allowing too many U.S. military flights and too few aid deliveries.

“Alain Joyandet, French cooperation



Cuban medical team cares for Haitian child
PHOTO: GRANMA



(XINHUA/YUAN MAN)

Medical workers of China treat the earthquake survivors in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 18

minister, said he had protested to Washington about the U.S. military’s management of the airport, where he said a French medical aid flight had been turned away.” (Telegraph)

China Daily on Jan. 18 in a report from Port-au-Prince said that aid distribution was in general “random, chaotic and minimal.” It described how crowds jostled for food and water “as U.S. military helicopters swooped down to throw out boxes of water bottles and rations. A reporter also saw foreign aid workers tossing packets of food to desperate Haitians.

“The distribution is totally disorganized. They are not identifying the people who need the water. The sick and the old have no chance,” said Estimé Pierre Deny, standing at the back of a crowd looking for water with his empty plastic container.”

The Chinese paper added that “Dozens of countries have sent planes with rescue teams, doctors, tents, food, medicine and other supplies, but faced a bottleneck at Port-au-Prince’s small airport.”

It is very difficult to find coverage in the U.S. corporate media of what socialist and progressive countries are doing to help Haiti. Perhaps it is because they don’t put a price tag on their sacrifice? We do hear a lot about the \$100 million that the Obama administration is promising. But on the ground, when thousands are dying every day from lack of water, food and medicine, that promise of greenbacks down the line isn’t enough.

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Petition and statement from International Action Center Solidarity with Haiti and demands on the U.S. gov’t

On Jan. 19 the International Action Center began a petition campaign around the following main points: “Haiti’s airport must be devoted to humanitarian relief flights. Haiti needs food, water and medical aid, not a U.S. military occupation. Haiti’s sovereignty and democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide must be restored.” See IACenter.org/haitipetition. Below are excerpts from an earlier IAC statement on Haiti.

Justice for Haiti means immediate aid, reparations, debt cancelation, restoration of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, asylum for all Haitians and self-determination, not military occupation.

The International Action Center expresses its full solidarity with the Haitian people at this time of greatest crisis following the devastating Jan. 12 earthquake.

Tons of supplies could be parachuted to desperate people in immediate need of food and especially water. The delivery of this essential aid, plus the placement of rescue and medical teams, must be the priority.

[The following] realities will continue to affect the future of Haiti, and all of us should keep them in mind.

1. Haiti is the poorest and least-developed country in the hemisphere because Haiti has been occupied by U.S. imperialism again and again. In 2004, in a coup planned from Washington and supported by troops from France and Canada, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide — a president democratically elected by more than 75 percent of the vote — was kidnapped and removed.
2. The Pentagon is controlling the U.S. intervention in the disaster, now increased to 10,000 troops, [whose] main role is repression and control, just as it is in Afghanistan, Iraq and other occupied countries.
3. President Barack Obama has appointed not only Bill Clinton but also George W. Bush in charge of raising support for the U.S. relief effort. It was Bush — probably the most hated of U.S. presidents worldwide — who cynically delayed relief efforts and allowed the

people of New Orleans to drown following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and who presided over the kidnapping and enforced exile of President Aristide.

4. From 1804 — when the first successful slave revolution in history drove out the French colonialists and slave masters — until the present, Washington has continually imposed sanctions, debt repayments and military intervention in an attempt to crush Haitian independence.
5. The \$100 million [in aid] President Obama promised sounds like a lot of money, but it is tiny compared to the amount the rulers of France and the United States stole from Haiti and its people over centuries.
6. The IMF [International Monetary Fund] immediately gave a \$100 million loan to Haiti. This is an outrage and a crime. Haiti’s debts are already unsustainable.

Millions of people in solidarity with the Haitian people are making great efforts to send emergency supplies. The Haitian

people themselves are organizing and gathering desperately needed supplies. Along with emergency peoples’ relief efforts, there must be peoples’ demands on the U.S. government and the powerful corporations.

In light of the above points, the International Action Center proposes the following demands:

- Immediate delivery of food, water and medical supplies, not military occupation;
- Allow the return of democratically elected President Aristide to Haiti and restore his government;
- Reparations from the U.S., France and Canada so that Haitians can take charge of the relief effort and invite the international assistance of their choice;
- Immediate cancelation of Haiti’s debts;
- Immediate asylum for all Haitians in the United States;
- Permission for Haitian residents of the U.S. to go to Haiti to help their families and to return to the U.S.;
- Self-determination for Haiti. □

BOSTON

Meeting features Fanmi Lavalas representative

By Claude “Toutou” St. Germain and Frank Neisser
Boston

On Jan. 10 a gathering of over 100 people of Haitian origin and supporters crowded into the United Steelworkers Local 8751 union hall in Boston for a rally to fight for the restoration of democracy in Haiti. The forum, hosted by Fanmi Lavalas of Boston, featured Dr. Maryse Narcisse, the highest-ranking international representative of Fanmi Lavalas and the direct representative of Dr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The meeting denounced the action of the Haitian Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) excluding Fanmi Lavalas from participation in February parliamentary elections in Haiti.

Dr. Narcisse has worked many years in both the public and private sectors, holding senior positions at the Ministry of Public Health and Population and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has served as national coordinator for the World Health Organization’s Expanded Program on Immunization, the executive director of Education and Human Resources Development and director general in the Ministry of Public Health and Population.

The meeting was opened with a welcome to Dr. Narcisse and a statement of solidarity for the Haitian people from Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner. Frantz Mendes, President of United Steelworkers Local 8751 and the first and only Haitian-American president of a Steelworkers local, welcomed everyone to the Local’s union hall.

Over 80 percent of Local 8751’s membership is of Haitian origin. Claude St. Germain of Fanmi Lavalas of Boston gave



WW PHOTO

At Boston City Council. From left: Steve Kirschbaum, Frank Neisser, Andre Francois, Frantz Mendes, Chuck Turner, Claude “Toutou” St. Germain, Dr. Maryse Narcisse, Jean Serge Felix, Charles Yancey, Ayanna Pressley, Ed Childs, Jonathan Regis

welcoming remarks, calling on all to work together and unite to build and strengthen Fanmi Lavalas, saying, “Yon Sel nou Feb, Ansanm Nou Fo, Ansanm, Ansanm nou se Lavalas” — “Alone we are weak, together we are strong, together we are the Flood.” The meeting was conducted in Creole with translation available for those who needed it.

The meeting was chaired by Babeau Villier. Carole Elas presented Dr. Narcisse with a plaque from Fanmi Lavalas of Boston. Fanmi Lavalas members Philippe Andre-Jacques and Robert Benjamin also spoke. Daniel Ulysse gave a comedy presentation. An opening prayer was given by Bishop Filipe Teixeira OFSJC of the Diocese of St Francis of Assissi, CCA.

In her talk, Dr. Narcisse called on everyone to unite and to strengthen communication and cooperation among all of

the Fanmi Lavalas chapters both inside and outside of Haiti. She discussed how Fanmi Lavalas was barred from Senate elections last April, and that the CEP was attempting to bar the party again from the upcoming February elections, even though the party has met all the constitutional requirements. Even though exiled President Aristide certified Dr. Narcisse as the representative of Fanmi Lavalas by e-mail to the CEP, they declared her mandate fraudulent.

Aristide was elected by a huge margin in 1990, culminating a popular revolution in Haiti against the U.S.-sponsored Duvalier dictatorship. He was kidnapped and flown out of the country in a U.S.-backed coup in 2004. As the elected president he should have a diplomatic passport, but it has been revoked by the current government. Aristide’s Fanmi Lavalas govern-

ment was a peoples’ government that focused on education and health care and meeting the needs of the people.

Dr. Narcisse’s talk was followed by a spirited question-and-answer session. Haitian activist Jonathan Regis of the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together spoke of organizing youth in solidarity with Haiti and asked Dr. Narcisse about Fanmi Lavalas’ efforts in bringing youth forward to participate in the struggle.

Miya X of the Women’s Fightback Network spoke of building and celebrating the leading role of women in fighting back against oppression around the world. Dr. Narcisse responded by discussing the importance to the movement of upholding and supporting the efforts of women to come forward under the most difficult circumstances.

On the morning of Jan. 11, Dr. Narcisse was accompanied by members of Fanmi Lavalas of Boston and the Boston School Bus Drivers to City Hall for a meeting with Boston’s four city councilors of color: Chuck Turner, Charles Yancey, Ayanna Pressley and Felix G. Arroyo. She was welcomed to City Hall by Councilor Turner, who asked her to explain how an election could take place in Haiti with Fanmi Lavalas, the peoples’ movement, excluded. The four councilors expressed support for a resolution deploring the exclusion of Fanmi Lavalas from the election and promised to work for its adoption by the Boston City Council as a whole.

St. Germain is a member of the interim coordinating committee for Fanmi Lavalas of Boston and an Executive Board member of USW Local 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers Union.

Behind Haiti’s extreme poverty France, U.S. looted first Black republic

Continued from page 1

bean saw the Haitian Revolution as a serious threat to their system. In 1799, Edward Stevens, the U.S. consul general to France’s colony there, wrote to Gen. Thomas Maitland, commander in chief of the British Expeditionary Force, warning that Britain’s colony of Jamaica as well as the United States were in danger of an invasion by the armed forces of Gen. Toussaint L’Ouverture.

After the proclamation of independence on Jan. 1, 1804, France and the United States both blockaded Haiti. France refused to recognize the Republic of Haiti and in 1825 the Haitians had to begin paying “indemnity” to the former colonial power for claims related to the destruction and seizure of the slave masters’ property during the revolutionary period of 1791-1803.

France’s defeat in Haiti caused tremendous financial losses for the colonial power, prompting it to sell land — the Louisiana Purchase — that allowed the U.S. to expand its control over large sections of North America.

The U.S. position at the time was exemplified by South Carolina Sen. Robert V. Hayne, who said that “Our policy with regard to Haiti is plain. We never can acknowledge her independence.” (“Haiti: A Slave Revolution,” p. 104)

It was not until 1862, during the Civil War, that the U.S. recognized Haiti. However, France maintained economic domi-

nance over Haiti during the 19th century. When the Haitian National Bank was established in the 1880s, it was overseen by French officers and financed with French capital.

France remained the principal neocolonial power in Haiti until 1915, when the U.S. invaded and occupied the country. A guerrilla campaign organized by the Haitian masses was crushed by the U.S. imperialists. Even after the Roosevelt administration withdrew from Haiti in 1934, the U.S. continued to have enormous influence inside the country.

The regimes of Papa Doc and Baby Doc Duvalier further extended the exploitation of Haitian labor and state militarization from the 1950s through the 1980s. The Haitian masses rose up in rebellion in February 1986 and forced the resignation of the Duvalier regime. However, the absence of a well-organized political party or coalition allowed the military to take the reins of power.

The social process that unfolded from 1986 to 1990 saw a sharpening of the political situation inside the country. In 1990 a former priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was elected to office with the overwhelming support of the working class and the poor.

President Aristide was overthrown by the U.S.-trained and CIA-backed Haitian military in 1991.

The Aristide government had not come to power through force of arms. As soon

as he sent volunteers to Scandinavian countries for military training, the army and police pushed Aristide aside. Presumably for his safety, the U.S. flew him to the mainland. Aristide continued to push for the restoration of his government while living in exile in the United States.

A naval blockade set up in 1992 under the first Bush administration to prevent Haitians from entering Florida was continued under the Clinton presidency. This racist immigration policy is still enforced.

The U.S. restored Aristide to the presidency in 1994 on condition that he would remain in office for just one year. In December 1995, with only 25 percent of the voters going to the polls, Rene Preval was elected.

In 2000, the popular Aristide ran again and was elected, to the great consternation of the United States. In 2003, opposition parties supported by the U.S. engaged in a massive destabilization campaign against the Aristide government, including military attacks on government offices.

On Feb. 29, 2004, U.S. military forces kidnapped President Aristide and deposed his government. Under the guise of a humanitarian mission, thousands of imperialist troops from the U.S., France and Canada occupied Haiti.

The U.S. flew President Aristide to the Central African Republic. A coordinated campaign launched by the International Action Center and the Congressional

Black Caucus Haiti Task Force demanded his release. This led to his relocation in the Republic of South Africa, where he remains to this day.

South Africa, led by the African National Congress, had been the only state to send its president to Haiti in January 2004 for the bicentennial celebrations.

The U.S. later convinced the United Nations to establish a military mission in Haiti known as MINUSTAH. Thousands of so-called peacekeepers, led by Brazilian troops, took over the occupation of the country. Numerous violations of the rights of Haitian people have occurred under the U.N. presence.

Need for another revolutionary upsurge

MINUSTAH forces targeted members and supporters of Fanmi Lavalas, the political party loyal to President Aristide. Many were harassed, imprisoned, driven into exile and even murdered.

In early 2008 food rebellions, strikes and clashes with the U.N. forces and the Haitian police gained international attention. This social situation was a manifestation of the deepening world crisis of finance capital that had begun the previous year in the United States.

In the early months of 2009, general strikes and rebellions in Guadeloupe and Martinique exposed the continuing role of French imperialism in the Caribbean. Nonetheless, as a result of the militancy of

Continued on the next page

Racist U.S. commentators slander Haiti

By G. Dunkel

For the crudest reactionaries like Pat Robertson and Bill O'Reilly, as well as David Brooks of the New York Times, it is "Voodoo," the religion that a majority of Haitians practice, which explains both the misery of Haiti and its poverty.

Pat Robertson says that Haiti's misery

and disasters come from a pact it made with the devil 200 years ago. "They were under the heel of the French, you know Napoleon the third and whatever, and they got together and swore a pact to the devil." (Christian Broadcasting Network)

David Brooks says that Haiti's poverty can be explained in large part by "the influence of the [V]oodoo religion, which

spreads the message that life is capricious and planning futile." (New York Times, Jan. 15)

These attacks on Voodoo go back over 200 years when the U.S. bourgeoisie, which was in large part a slavocracy, was completely shocked that the enslaved Africans of Haiti could organize themselves, rise up, smash the old order, kill their masters and set up a new state that was able to maintain its independence.

Voodoo played an inspirational and unifying role in this revolution. It gave the enslaved African people of Haiti the solidarity they needed to organize a mass uprising under the noses of the slave owners.

Two hundred delegates gathered August 14, 1791, at Bois-Caïman, set the date for the uprising for one week later, and selected Boukman Dutty, a Voodoo priest, to lead the uprising. According to well-founded but oral sources, Boukman made the following speech: "The god who created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm, though hidden in the clouds, he watches us. He sees all that the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works. Our god who is good to us orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of the whites who has so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty, which speaks in the hearts of us all."

This was not a "pact with the devil." It was a call for revolution — a conscious, planned revolution.

Another myth is that Haiti, once the richest European colony in the Western Hemisphere, is now the poorest nation because of some defect in its national character. For example, Brooks claims "Responsibility is often not internalized." This is nothing less than vile racism and baseless slander.

To discount the effects of oppression, slavery and repression, Brooks goes on to assert, "Well, [Haiti] has a history of oppression, slavery and colonialism. But

so does Barbados, and Barbados is doing pretty well."

Haiti was rich before the enslaved Africans successfully revolted because they were so harshly exploited. The wealth Haitians produced was one-third to one-half of the gross domestic product of France, and supplied the foundations of its current national wealth. For 13 years France waged a genocidal war of extermination against the Haitian people, killing over half of them. After a heroic rebellion in Barbados, hundreds of rebels were executed, but the overall lasting damage was limited compared to the slaughter of Haitians.

After Haiti declared its independence in 1804, the United States refused to recognize it until 1862. France used its fleet to force Haiti to pay 150 million gold francs for the freedom it won at the cost of so many lives. France sold the Louisiana Purchase to the U.S. for 80 million gold francs.

Haiti had to borrow the money from the U.S. to pay France and didn't finish paying off this debt until 1947. The current value of what Haiti paid is about \$20 billion.

The U.S. propped up the Duvalier dictators, father François and son Jean-Claude, from 1957 to 1986, while they stole hundreds of millions of dollars and ran Haiti for the benefit of the U.S. corporations, themselves and their cronies. The U.S. Air Force flew the driven-from-office Jean-Claude Duvalier to France in 1986 to protect him from the Haitian justice system.

How Jean-Bertrand Aristide won two democratic elections as president — the first in 1990 with 67.5 percent of the vote, the second in 2000 with 92 percent of the vote — and how the U.S. organized and financed his removal after each election is completely distorted, if mentioned at all. Tens of thousands of Haitians, at the risk of their lives, have marched in the streets over the past six years to demand his return. Signs calling for his return are popping up all over Port-au-Prince, according to press reports. □



Survivors carry water in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 15.

Continued from page 8

the trade union organizations and youth on these islands, workers won significant wage increases and an improvement of working conditions.

In Haiti during this time, mass demonstrations took place on the anniversary of the coup against Aristide. Some 10,000 supporters of Fanmi Lavalas took to the streets demanding an end to the United Nations occupation and the restoration of the elected government that had been overthrown five years earlier.

Less than two weeks later, another series of protests took place which sought to lift the ban on candidates supporting exiled President Aristide.

According to Haiti Action, a solidarity organization headquartered in the Bay Area of California, "Over 10,000 pro-democracy activists took to the streets of Haiti's capital, once again, to demand the return of President Aristide, who was kidnapped by U.S. officials five years ago." (Haitiaction.net, March 12, 2009)

While these events unfolded in Haiti, the International Action Center in the United States conducted an online petition drive against a U.S. deportation order affecting 30,000 Haitians. In the aftermath of the Jan. 12 earthquake, President Barack Obama has temporarily lifted the deportation order, pending the outcome of the current humanitarian crisis.

However, as a result of the quake and the presence of U.S. troops, the present situation in Haiti can only be resolved through the independent actions of the masses of workers and youth inside the country. Anti-imperialists and solidarity activists in the United States must also demand that the deportation orders be lifted permanently against Haitians.

In addition, those seeking to truly

stabilize the political situation in Haiti should demand the restoration of President Aristide to power. Immediately after the quake, Aristide said he was prepared to return to Haiti as soon as possible.

Haiti should be paid reparations for the years of exploitation and oppression imposed by the United States, France, Canada and the United Nations. The imperialist powers have severely hampered Haiti's ability to become self-reliant and truly independent.

The imperialist-imposed policies that have underdeveloped Haiti for more than two centuries are the root cause of the poverty and unemployment. The collapse of the agricultural sector derives from neocolonial policies designed to preserve the country as a vast reservoir of cheap labor for the capitalist corporations operating there.

With the erosion of agricultural production in the rural areas, the masses were forced to relocate in the urban centers, resulting in tremendous overcrowding along with an acute shortage of housing. With an earthquake of such magnitude and the determination of the U.S. to dominate the relief efforts, poverty will inevitably increase in Haiti.

Who will rebuild Haiti and on what basis? Any real progress toward reconstruction has to place the masses of workers and farmers at the center of the process. There is no doubt this earthquake has done horrible damage to the Haitian people and the underdeveloped infrastructure. Nevertheless, the current situation provides an opportunity for the workers and youth to exercise independent self-organization based upon their own class and national interests, even as they struggle for survival. □



Earthquake survivors view a crack, running through a town on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince.

Emergency aid to Haiti

In response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti, IFCO/Pastors for Peace is supporting the following organizations, which are delivering humanitarian aid quickly: Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, Lakou New York and Movement for Dominican Haitian Women.

Tax-deductible donations can be sent to IFCO/Haiti Relief, at 418 W. 145th St., New York, NY 10031. To donate by credit card, see www.ifconews.org. For information, call 212-926-5757.

In the New York area, to donate first aid supplies and personal hygiene goods,

contact Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees at 718-735-4660.

Tax-deductible donations for emergency medical teams and equipment can be sent to Partners in Health, a Boston-based nonprofit organization which has set up field hospitals in Haiti, at P.O. Box 845578, Boston, MA 02284-5578. For information, call 617-432-5256 or see www.pih.org where credit card donations can be made.

Information on how to donate to Fanmi Lavalas will be forthcoming as soon as it is available.

— Kathy Durkin

Kabul and Port-au-Prince

With most media focusing on Haiti and people here in the U.S. gripped by the humanitarian crisis, they may have missed the dramatic news out of Afghanistan. Even as thousands of U.S. troops were landing in Port-au-Prince, Afghan resistance fighters carried out a coordinated attack in the heart of occupied Kabul, the Afghan capital, hitting targets near the central bank; the ministries of finance, justice and mines; the entrance to the presidential palace; and the luxury Serena hotel, where people from the NATO countries stay. They also took over part of the Ferushgah shopping center.

The Jan. 18 Wall Street Journal reported that the resistance fighters ordered vendors and customers to leave Ferushgah mall “in an apparent attempt to minimize civilian casualties.” Speaking of the assault, Afghan parliament member Daud Sultanzoï said, “To be able to infiltrate at such depth, into the inner periphery of power here, is a mind-blowing achievement” for the resistance.

Some of the fighters died blowing themselves up while attacking the puppet government. They all were ready to die if necessary.

This all says a lot about the Afghan resistance. It is careful of its relationship with the Afghan population, even in central Kabul. When the Taliban was in power in 2001, it was an obscure organization with a program unpopular in much of Afghanistan. Now, after nine years of U.S.-NATO occupation, it appears to have transformed into a serious anti-imperialist fighting force.

Whatever they feel toward the Taliban, most Afghans look upon the resistance as being their own side. The U.S. and other NATO troops are foreign invaders, threatening their culture, their religion, their lives and those of their families. Many Afghans are prepared to make every sacrifice to drive out the foreign occupiers.

Afghans don’t believe the U.S. is there to help them. Afghan women don’t believe the Western troops are there to defend women’s rights — one “humanitarian” pretext for the 2001 invasion. They don’t believe the U.S. is there to suppress the heroin trade — it’s more likely that U.S. banks are the final depositing place of most heroin profits. They even suspect Washington may not be that serious about eliminating al-Qaida.

The more believable reason for the escalated U.S. occupation is that it aims

at setting up permanent military bases in the region to maintain and increase U.S. corporate control of the energy resources of Central and West Asia. Such a reason is consistent with the Pentagon’s world-wide role — in Afghanistan, in Iraq, from Africa to Latin America. The role of the U.S. Armed Forces is to defend and expand U.S. strategic power and with it the profits of U.S.-based banks and corporations.

Now consider Port-au-Prince. The need to aid Haiti to recover from the earthquake that has brought such horror to its victims and survivors serves an ulterior purpose: It is a pretext for a renewed and escalated U.S. military intervention.

Whatever “humanitarian” acts Marines and Airborne Infantry perform are a cover for re-establishing a repressive force in Haiti that had disintegrated with the earthquake. The Haitian police force has disappeared. The MINUSTAH force — the U.N. occupation army for the past five years, playing the role of the repressive state against the Haitian population — was hit hard by the earthquake.

Washington had no problem letting a few days go by without rushing in food and water. But the U.S. is in a rush to bring in troops. Indeed, the U.S. wants control of Haiti in its own hands, no longer trusting a U.N. or Brazilian intermediary.

The presidents of Venezuela and Nicaragua, who are well aware of the role and threat of the U.S. military in Latin America, are right to add their voices to those warning of the U.S. military’s role in Haiti.

The corporate media’s handling of news from Haiti also exposes Washington’s real aims. They present the desperate acts of Haitians trying to feed themselves and their families as “looting.” Instead of trying to get food and water into the survivor’s hands as quickly as possible, the U.S.-run apparatus uses the alleged “chaos” as an excuse to send more troops. What Washington fears most is that the Haitian people, organizing themselves for survival, may set up a structure that competes with the repressive state.

It is important that people here in the U.S. who are in solidarity with the Haitians remain aware that the Pentagon’s role is not to aid Haiti, but to occupy the country and suppress the population. The demand should be the same as in Afghanistan: aid and reparations yes, occupation no. □

MLK Day brings out thousands in Houston

Continued from page 5
migrant rights activists and the Houston Bolivarian Society.

With bright blue skies and warm weather, the parade led off with Grand Marshall Derek King, the nephew of Dr. King, leading more than 150 parades entries. Since the earthquake in Haiti, the focus of the parade was changed to stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti. Donations of non-perishables and money were collected for Haiti.

The Palestinian banner read “Sisters and Brothers of Haiti — the Palestinian People Feel Your Pain” and it was received with cheers from the crowded sidewalks.

The Death Penalty Abolition Movement parade entry spoke with the crowd using a sound system, telling them to join in the struggle to abolish the racist and anti-poor death penalty. On-lookers yelled and cheered and put their fists in the air.

— Report and photo by Gloria Rubac

Workers World statement

SOLIDARITY WITH HAITI’S PEOPLE

Following are excerpts from a WW statement that was published online on Jan. 13. Go to www.workers.org for the entire statement.

The earthquake that flattened Haiti’s capital and brought a new calamity to millions of people in that heroic but impoverished country has awakened calls for solidarity and aid from the vast majority of the world’s people. The number one priority is to provide food, drinkable water and emergency medical care to the approximately 3 million Haitians affected by the disaster to try to limit the deaths, injuries and illnesses to the people.

All reports from Port-au-Prince, located 14 miles from the shallow epicenter of the devastating magnitude 7.0 earthquake and whose un-reinforced buildings nearly all collapsed, are that casualties are already in the tens of thousands. Even the main hospital and the national palace have collapsed, as has the hotel housing the U.N. occupation force. One Haitian minister said he expected 100,000 deaths.

Anyone feeling solidarity with fellow humans is moved by this tragedy. One is especially moved if aware of the world’s debt to the Haitian people for their historic contribution: They carried out a successful slave rebellion and liberated their island from French colonialism.

We know that many of our readers want to offer their own personal aid to show solidarity with Haiti. There will be a myriad of private charities asking donations for aid to Haiti. Many of the most powerful charities, like the Red Cross, are closely tied to the imperialist establishment that has no desire to promote Haitian sovereignty.

It was predictable that the U.S. government, while delaying any actual delivery of aid, put its military foot forward. Gen. Douglas Fraser, commander of the U.S. Southern Command, said that the U.S. would send the Aircraft Carrier Carl Vinson along with the U.S. Bataan, an amphibian ship with an expeditionary unit of 2,200 Marines to police the Haitians in Port-au-Prince, claiming that security was “a serious concern.” (New York Times blog, Jan. 13) Later it was revealed that 10,000 U.S. troops will occupy Haiti.

In addition, while much of the U.S. media reports alleged looting, few mention that many Haitians barely survive from day to day and breaking into a shop may be the only way they are able to obtain food. No one can forget how the U.S.

federal and local governments handled the disaster caused by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. There police, National Guard, army and mercenary guards from Blackwater focused on control and repression, not on aid and rescue.

Socialist Cuba, in contrast, with the experience of sending medical brigades to meet emergencies in Pakistan, Bolivia, China, Guatemala and Indonesia, already had a team of 403 people aiding Haiti, 344 of them healthcare workers, some of whom immediately set up field hospitals. More doctors are on their way. On the first day they had treated 800 Haitians and performed 19 surgical interventions. (TeleSur, Jan. 14).

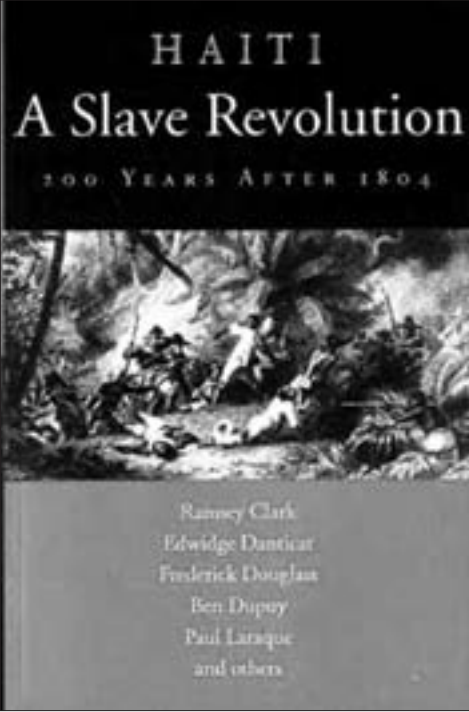
Chile, Nicaragua, Spain, Guatemala, France, Mexico and Russia all rushed aid, mostly food and water, to Haiti on Jan. 13, while the U.S. was still discussing how the Marines would land. China sent a 60-member search-and-rescue team with sniffer dogs.

Venezuela immediately sent 19 doctors and 10 firefighters who specialize in search and rescue along with 20 other experts and material aid. The Bolivarian government of Venezuela has always recognized South America’s debt to Haiti, which in the 1820s gave the aid to Simón Bolívar he needed to help free some of the South American countries from rule by Spain.

French imperialism especially — and the U.S. too — owes a great portion of its early wealth and subsequent development to looting the natural resources and super-exploiting the labor of Haiti, though they both refuse to acknowledge the reparations they owe to the Haitian people for that and for their continued role in preventing Haiti’s development.

The progressive movement in the U.S., while joining in providing aid and solidarity to the Haitian people, should also demand that the U.S. government stop deporting Haitians, allow the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and provide reparations so the new Haitian government can establish a functioning system and stop military intervention and subversion of Haiti.

The Bail Out the People Movement has the right idea with its demand to use the tens of billions of dollars Wall Street now wants to pay its undeserving executive bankers in bonuses as a down payment on reparations to Haiti. It’s hard to imagine a similar transfer of wealth that could be more effective in establishing justice. □



HAITI: A Slave Revolution, 200 Years after 1804

“Haiti: A Slave Revolution, 200 Years after 1804” was published in 2004 as a joint project of the International Action Center and the Haiti Support Network. It is not a traditional history book or textbook, but a people’s history. In the preface the editors state, “This book is going to combat 200 years of racist indoctrination and propaganda about the Haitian Revolution. It is essential to challenge these stereotypes in order to build true, informed solidarity with Haiti. Currently out of print, “Haiti: A Slave Revolution” can be read online at www.iacenter.org/haiti.

U.S. targets Yemen, expands ‘war on terror’

By Joyce Chediak

Using the pretext of fighting terror, the U.S. government has expanded its war into the poor Arab country of Yemen.

Washington claims a Yemeni cleric and a small group in Yemen called “al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula” provided the marching orders for the alleged “Christmas bomber,” a young Nigerian man who, at most, managed to set a fire in his trousers on a flight bound for Detroit.

Government hype, amplified by a willing media, adds that al Qaeda has a “natural affinity” for Yemeni tribes; that Yemen is the Bin Laden family’s ancestral homeland, so Osama Bin Laden calls the shots there; and that Shias and Sunnis fight in Yemen.

The most powerful capitalist countries — the U.S., Britain and France — temporarily shut down their embassies in Yemen, citing impending danger of an al Qaeda attack.

On Jan. 4, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said instability in Yemen poses a “global threat.” On Jan. 8 President Barack Obama declared, “We are at war against Al Qaeda.”

CIA admits provocateur actions

Washington’s attempt to stamp its cookie-cutter terror scenario on Yemen has strayed too far from the truth even for the CIA.

After interviewing highly-placed CIA officials, the New York Times wrote on Jan. 12, “politically charged clamor has lumped together disparate cases and obscured the fact[s]” regarding threats to the U.S. The Times says “enemies on American soil in 2009 ... were a scattered,

uncoordinated group of amateurs. ... The weapons were old-fashioned guns and explosives — in several cases, duds supplied by F.B.I. informants.”

“The term ‘Al Qaeda,’” the Times continued, “used as a catchall ... blurs important distinctions. ... None of the 2009 cases appears to be directly tied to ‘Al Qaeda central,’ as experts refer to the Pakistan-based group led by Mr. bin Laden. Others involved ersatz ‘Qaeda’ agents who actually worked for the F.B.I.”

The Times calls Al Qaeda in Yemen a loosely linked affiliate of Mr. Bin Laden’s group, and quotes Audrey Kurth Cronin of the National War College as saying “The proper response is to stop calling all these plots ‘Al Qaeda.’”

Former ambassador counters Yemen ‘myths’

Edmund J. Hull, the U.S. ambassador to Yemen from 2002 to 2004, countered “myths” in a Jan. 12 New York Times op-ed. In Yemen “there is no clear divide between Sunnis and Shiites ... and it’s not unknown for Yemenis to convert from Sunni to Shiite as a matter of convenience.”

Hull continued, “The bin Ladens are not part of any politically significant tribe or clan, nor has the family sought to convert its wealth into power in Yemen. ... There is no deep-seeded affinity between Yemeni tribes and the Qaeda movement.”

A look at the relationship of forces shows how preposterous it is to claim that Yemen threatens the U.S. The U.S. spends more on the military than the arms budgets of every other government in the world combined.

Diego Garcia, a huge naval base in use against Iraq, is not far from Yemen.

Washington has hundreds of U.S. soldiers in the French base in Djibouti, just across the straits from Yemen. U.S. naval ships are now in Yemeni waters.

In marked contrast, Yemen is struggling to keep its head above water. In Yemen 45 percent of the 23.8 million people live below the poverty line, 35 percent are unemployed, and per capita gross national product is only \$2,500. Infant mortality is 54.7 percent and literacy 50 percent, according to the CIA World Factbook.

Yemen gets significant revenue from oil, but the world economic crisis and the resulting drop in oil prices has hurt it badly. Eight million Yemenis work abroad, sending home a billion dollars in remittances yearly. Yemen is burdened by the presence of 10,000 desperate Somalis fleeing war, poverty and hunger in their country.

Nevertheless, the U.S. war on Yemen has begun.

On Jan. 2, U.S. Gen. David Petraeus met with Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Salih. Washington has announced \$70 million a year would go to Yemen for “counter-terrorism training.” U.S. “advisers” are in Yemen. U.S. drones have already unleashed cruise missiles.

What’s at stake for the U.S.?

Just as in Afghanistan and Iran, in Yemen Washington seeks not to fight terror, but to grab the natural resources and territory belonging to the indigenous people.

At stake is who profits from the drilling and distribution of oil. Yemen contains one of the world’s largest untapped petroleum reserves, which U.S. oil companies want.

Of more immediate importance is Yemen’s strategic location on key oil routes. At question is a key oil shipping lane, the Bab el Mandeb strait.

Twenty miles wide at its narrowest point, Bab el Mandeb lies in the waters of Yemen, Djibouti and Ethiopia, with Yemen most positioned to exercise control over the strait’s shipping lanes through its possession of Perim Island. Traffic through the strait is associated with the Suez Canal and the Suez/Sumed complex, a major pipeline through Egypt that brings oil from the Arabian Peninsula to Europe. Vital oil routes for China are close by.

In 2006 the U.S. Energy Department reported an estimated 3.3 million barrels of oil a day flowed through the straits. Most is from Saudi Arabia, Washington’s lynchpin and the world’s largest producer and exporter of total petroleum liquids.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the strait is a choke-point between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, and a strategic link between the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean. This government agency explains, “Closure of the Bab el-Mandeb could keep tankers from the Persian Gulf from reaching the Suez Canal/Sumed pipeline complex, diverting them around the southern tip of Africa.”

The Pentagon is in Yemen not to squash terrorism, but to grab its oil and to dominate strategic oil routes.

Next: Why is Yemen unstable? Why does military intervention fuel suicide bombings? What do U.S. workers gain from U.S. bombings in Yemen?

Based on a talk given at a Workers World forum in New York City on Jan. 16.

Protesters demand freedom for Dr. Aafia Siddiqui

By John Catalinotto
New York

Just before Dr. Aafia Siddiqui’s trial was to begin the morning of Jan. 19, her supporters around the world demonstrated their firm belief in her innocence. In New York, both Pakistani immigrants and U.S. progressives gathered near the courthouse at 500 Pearl Street to stage a public protest and then attend her trial. Pre-trial motions and jury selection were held from Jan 11 through Jan 15.

The start of Dr. Siddiqui’s trial was declared “Free Dr. Aafia Siddiqui Day” across the U.S., Pakistan, Europe, Australia and Middle East. She is charged with the attempted murder of FBI agents in Afghanistan. According to the prosecutors and all U.S. officials, she has no links to any “terrorist organizations.”

Dr. Siddiqui is considered to be a “daughter of the nation” in Pakistan. The Pakistani Supreme Court recently called her case “the most important challenge for the country.” The Pakistani Parliament passed an overwhelming resolution supporting her and has forced the government to pay for her legal defense in U.S. courts.

Dr. Siddiqui is a 37-year-old Pakistani woman educated in neuroscience at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her supporters say she was illegally kidnapped with her three young children in Karachi, Pakistan, in 2003 and taken to U.S. custody in Afghanistan, where she was held in secret detention and tortured



for five years. In 2007 a briefing paper on U.S. responsibility for “enforced disappearances” or rendition, authored by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and four other similar groups, named her as a missing person.

In July 2008, Dr. Siddiqui was arrested in Ghazni, Afghanistan. At the time she was shot and severely wounded during an interrogation by FBI agents. The FBI says she grabbed an unsecured M-4 rifle from a U.S. soldier and started firing at the soldiers and FBI agents. Her supporters and attorneys say there is no forensic evidence linking her to the weapon, and the only thing for sure about that day was that Siddiqui was shot.

Dr. Siddiqui’s torture and secret detention by U.S. forces in Afghanistan aroused enormous anger and indignation, especially in Central and Western Asia. Her



WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Supporters mobilize outside court as Dr. Siddiqui’s trial begins.

The Pakistan-U.S. Freedom Forum organized the New York protest supporting Dr. Siddiqui, which was supported by other organizations including the International Action Center, World Can’t Wait and the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights. □

Solidaridad con el pueblo de Haití

Declaración del Partido Workers World-Mundo Obrero

14 de enero de 2010

El terremoto que arrasó la capital de Haití y trajo una nueva calamidad a millones de personas en ese heroico pero empobrecido país, ha despertado el llamado a la solidaridad y a la ayuda de la inmensa mayoría de la población mundial. La prioridad número uno es proporcionar alimentos, agua potable y atención médica de emergencia a aproximadamente 3 millones de haitianos/as afectados/as por el desastre para intentar limitar las muertes, lesiones y enfermedades al pueblo.

Todos los informes desde Puerto Príncipe, localizado a 14 millas del superficial epicentro del devastador terremoto de magnitud de 7,0 y cuyos edificios sin cimientos sólidas casi todos se derrumbaron, son que el número de víctimas ya está en las decenas de miles. Incluso el hospital principal y el Palacio Nacional se han derrumbado, al igual que el hotel que alojaba la fuerza de ocupación de las Naciones Unidas. Un Ministro haitiano dijo que se esperaban 100.000 muertes.

Cualquiera que sienta solidaridad con los seres humanos se conmueve por esta tragedia. Especialmente se conmueve si se está consciente de la deuda que el mundo tiene al pueblo haitiano por su contribución histórica: llevó a cabo una rebelión de esclavos exitosa y liberó a su isla del colonialismo francés.

Sabemos que muchos/as de nuestros/as lectores/as desean ofrecer su propia asistencia personal para mostrar solidaridad con Haití. Habrá un sinnúmero de organizaciones caritativas privadas pidiendo donaciones para Haití. Muchas de las organizaciones benéficas más poderosos, como la Cruz Roja, están estrechamente

vinculadas al establecimiento imperialista que no tiene ningún deseo de promover la soberanía haitiana.

Sugerimos que aquellas personas que deseen apoyar la soberanía de Haití, así como brindar ayuda directamente a la población haitiana, donen a Fanmi Lavalas. Esto fue recomendado el 13 de enero en una reunión en Boston convocada por el sindicato de conductores de autobuses escolares Steelworkers Local 8751 que está integrado mayoritariamente por haitianos, además de otras organizaciones locales y de Haití.

Fanmi Lavalas es el partido asociado con el ex presidente haitiano Jean-Bertrand Aristide, el más popular de los recientes líderes haitianos que dos veces fue removido por golpes de estado militares apoyados por Estados Unidos. La última vez, en febrero de 2004 Aristide fue expulsado del país por las tropas y agentes estadounidenses en colaboración con el imperialismo de Francia y Canadá.

Los gobiernos proporcionarán la mayor parte de la ayuda a Haití. Algunos de estos gobiernos, principalmente las antiguas potencias coloniales y el imperialismo de EEUU, intentarán utilizar el desastre como una manera de incrementar su propio dominio sobre Haití, incluso mientras otros gobiernos ayudan libremente basados en la solidaridad.

Era predecible que el Gobierno de Estados Unidos, mientras retrasaba cualquier entrega real de ayuda, le daba prioridad a lo militar. El General Douglas Fraser, comandante del Comando Sur estadounidense, dijo que Estados Unidos enviaría el portaaviones Carl Vinson junto al U.S. Bataan, un barco anfibio con una uni-

dad expedicionaria de 2.200 infantes de marina para vigilar a los/as haitianos/as en Puerto Príncipe, afirmando que la seguridad era “una preocupación grave”. (Blog del New York Times, 13 de enero) Más tarde se reveló que 10.000 tropas estadounidenses ocuparían Haití.

Además, mientras la gran parte de los medios de comunicación de EEUU informa sobre presuntos saqueos, pocos mencionan que muchos/as haitianos/as apenas sobreviven día a día y el irrumpir en una tienda puede ser la única manera de poder obtener alimentos. Nadie puede olvidar cómo el gobierno federal y los locales de EEUU manejaron la catástrofe causada por el huracán Katrina en Nueva Orleans. Allí la policía, la guardia nacional, el ejército y los guardias mercenarios de Blackwater se concentraron en controlar y reprimir, no en ayudar y rescatar.

En contraste, Cuba socialista, con la experiencia de enviar brigadas médicas para atender situaciones de emergencia en Pakistán, Bolivia, China, Guatemala e Indonesia, ya tenía un equipo de 403 personas ayudando en Haití, 344 de ellas trabajadores/as de la salud, algunos/as de los cuales inmediatamente establecieron clínicas de emergencia. Más médicos están en camino desde Cuba. El primer día trataron 800 haitianos/as y realizaron 19 intervenciones quirúrgicas. (TeleSur, 14 de enero)

Chile, Nicaragua, España, Guatemala, Francia, México y Rusia todos corrieron a ayudar, principalmente con alimentos y agua el 13 de enero, mientras que Estados Unidos todavía estaba discutiendo cómo llegaría la Marina. China envió un equipo de búsqueda y rescate de 60 miembros

con perros de rescate.

Venezuela inmediatamente envió 19 médicos y 10 bomberos que se especializan en la búsqueda y rescate junto a otros 20 expertos, más ayuda material. El gobierno bolivariano de Venezuela siempre ha reconocido la deuda de América del Sur a Haití que en la década de 1820 le brindó la ayuda que Simón Bolívar necesitaba para liberar a algunos de los países sudamericanos del dominio español.

El imperialismo francés especialmente, y Estados Unidos también, deben gran parte de su riqueza inicial y desarrollo posterior al saqueo de los recursos naturales y a la súper explotación de la mano de obra de Haití, aunque se niegan a admitir las reparaciones que le deben al pueblo haitiano por eso y por su continuo papel en prevenir el desarrollo de Haití.

El movimiento progresista en los Estados Unidos, al mismo tiempo en que se une al suministro de ayuda y solidaridad para el pueblo haitiano, también debe exigir el fin de las deportaciones de haitianos/as por el gobierno de EEUU, permitir el retorno de Aristide, detener la intervención militar y la subversión de Haití y proporcionar reparaciones para que el nuevo gobierno haitiano pueda establecer un sistema que funcione.

El Movimiento Pro Rescate del Pueblo (Bail Out the People Movement), tiene la idea correcta cuando exige que se utilicen las decenas de miles de millones de dólares con los que Wall Street ahora quiere pagar en bonos a sus banqueros ejecutivos, como pago inicial en las reparaciones a Haití. Es difícil imaginar una transferencia similar de riqueza que sería más eficaz para establecer justicia. □

La historia de dos ejércitos

Por John Catalinotto

A pesar de las armas de alta tecnología y la potencia militar sin rival del Pentágono, los militares estadounidenses se encuentran empantanados por las deficiencias evidentes enraizadas en el sistema capitalista que defienden. Los combatientes de la resistencia, con mucho menos poder militar, han demostrado la capacidad de innovar y adaptar sus tácticas a lo que sea necesario en su guerra para liberar a Afganistán.

Las dificultades del Pentágono en crear un programa especial para llevar a cabo intervenciones coloniales en Afganistán y Pakistán han puesto de manifiesto su debilidad.

Antes de que el general Stanley McChrystal se hiciera cargo de la ocupación de Afganistán el año pasado, había presidido un grupo especial del Estado Mayor Conjunto que inventó el “Programa de Especialistas en Afganistán-Pakistán”. En noviembre, el Pentágono anunció el programa diciendo que iba a crear tres unidades de 304 personas cada una, 912 en total, para formar el nuevo cuerpo.

La principal innovación del programa es que en lugar de la habitual rotación de un año en la región, los oficiales que se ofrecen voluntarios o son asignados,

deberán pasar de tres a cinco años de servicio allí. Comenzarían con cursos de capacitación por 16 semanas en urdu, pashto o en dari, los tres principales idiomas de la región, y se convertirían en expertos en la historia y la cultura de los pueblos que allí viven.

La orden era que el Ejército, la Armada, la Fuerza Aérea y la Infantería de Marina nombrarían a un número proporcional de sus “mejores personas” a este programa. Este personal participaría como capacitadores, planificadores militares y asesores de los ministerios afganos. En otras palabras, serían la columna vertebral de la ocupación colonial de esos países y sus pueblos.

En teoría, este tipo de fuerza podría convertirse en arma contra cualquier resistencia o movimiento de liberación. Pero hasta ahora, las Fuerzas Armadas sólo cuentan con 172 oficiales dispuestos a asumir la tarea. Además, de acuerdo a un artículo del New York Times del 6 de enero, el Almirante Mike Mullen, jefe del Estado Mayor Conjunto, amonestó a los jefes de los cuatro servicios armados a mediados de diciembre, por no escoger las personas más adecuadas entre los pocos que enviaron.

Cuando una fuerza militar sirve a la construcción de un imperio y la meta

principal del imperio es aumentar las ganancias de los bancos y corporaciones, los militares también se adaptan a estas presiones. ¿Cuál es el objetivo principal de los oficiales? Es avanzar en sus carreras.

Dado que las promociones han venido siempre a través de una sucesión de nombramientos por un año, los oficiales evaden el Programa de Especialistas en Afganistán-Pakistán.

A su vez, los altos mandos de cada servicio también se mostraron reacios a enviar a sus “mejores personas” a esta unidad especial. Eso hubiera significado la entrega de sus subordinados más capaces, quienes ayudan al avance de las carreras de los oficiales de alto rango. Esto también se convirtió en un obstáculo.

En un intento por corregir este fracaso, Mullen criticó a la cúpula por una parte, y por otra aseguró que las carreras de los de la unidad especial avanzarían. Si esta combinación de castigo e incentivo va a crear el cuerpo colonial deseado, está aún por verse.

El ejército de resistencia

El ejército de resistencia puede contar una historia completamente diferente. Los combatientes de la resistencia ya conocen las lenguas y las costumbres locales pues son parte del pueblo. Hasta los in-

formes del Pentágono reportan que están creciendo en fuerza e influencia, y la población los ve como combatientes locales, mientras que ve a las fuerzas de la OTAN/EEUU como invasores.

La resistencia también ha sido flexible al adaptar sus tácticas. Quizás nada indica esto mejor que el atentado contra el Puesto Militar de Operaciones Avanzadas Chapman de la CIA el 30 de diciembre que mató a siete agentes de la CIA, entre ellos algunos oficiales de alto rango y un oficial jordano, junto con el agente de la resistencia. Según la última versión de los hechos, las fuerzas de la resistencia que operan en la provincia de Khost, decidieron que era necesario contraatacar después de que aviones no tripulados mataron a algunos de sus líderes junto a muchas otras personas.

Tomaron la decisión de sacrificar a un doble agente calificado, un palestino con ciudadanía jordana que estaba combatiendo con la resistencia por idealismo y por el odio al imperialismo. Él no vaciló. Su decisión era todo lo contrario a la preocupación por avanzar su carrera.

No hay duda de que el Pentágono puede llevar mucha destrucción a la región de Afganistán-Pakistán y a su pueblo. Sin embargo, hay muchas razones para dudar que pueda vencer la resistencia. □